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Preface

Since my first deployment to Japan, the Philippines and South Korea in 1983, I have become aware of a change in attitudes of these very close U.S. allies. This change in attitude resides within the civil, military and political leadership of these nations and manifests itself as a more assertive force willing to stand up to the mighty United States. I believe it is also this new more assertive attitude that will increasingly influence dealings between the U.S. and Asian states far into the 21st century. It is this attitude change that I hope to convey to the readers of this paper so they may better understand the new status that is sought by many in East Asia. I also want to acknowledge the guidance and constructive critiques provided by both Dr. Jeffrey Grey and Colonel Gary Warner. Without their patience, this project would not have been possible.

Chapter 1

Introduction

No more important geographic development of our era exists than the rise of Asia in world affairs.

Michel Oksenberg, *The American View of China in Preparing America's Foreign Policy for the 21st Century*.

For over fifty years, the United States has served as a critical regional balancer in East Asia and has emerged from the cold war as the world's only superpower.¹ However, in the absence of any economic or military peer, U.S. influence in Asia is in a state of flux. For the first time in their history, many Asian states have greater freedom and control over their interests, goals, and destiny. Concurrently, Asia, notwithstanding the financial crisis in 1997, has been economically vibrant and stable. These conditions are encouraging the nations of East Asia to seek greater roles in determining the future of the region. Many in Asia are now taking advantage of this opportunity not only to protect and enhance security and welfare of their states, but will also actively participate in the writing of the rules of the game in the political, economic, and security arenas.

The conditions for this attitude change were set at the end of the Cold War and are

¹ In this paper East Asia consists of two sub-regions, Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia. Northeast Asia is defined as including the countries of Mongolia, Japan, South Korea, North Korea, and China. Southeast Asia is defined as including the countries of the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and Burma.

being driven by the growing economic importance of the region. In the decade since the end of the Cold War, the United States maintains seven defense agreements with other nations that were largely based on a cold war threat. Five of these agreements are with the Asian nations of Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, and Australia. Before the end of the cold war, U.S. foreign policy focused mainly on economic or security relations in which European concerns were paramount. Now, with trade between the United States and Asian nations reaching 40% of the U.S. total and 100,000 U.S. military service members committed to the security of Asia, "European concerns may not dominate" U.S. foreign policy as they have in the past.² So, for economic and security reasons, it is essential for the United States to remain actively engaged in East Asia with a level of influence that is commensurate with the regions strategic importance.

Now, in a unipolar world with the United States at the top, the U.S. finds itself confronted with a paradox when addressing stability issues in East Asia. Despite the threat of conflict on the Korean Peninsula, conflicting claims in the South China Sea, hostile rhetoric between Taiwan and China, and the uncertain futures of Indonesia, East Timor, and Burma, the region is more stable and more peaceful than at any time in this century. In an atmosphere of renewed economic growth, there is still a pervasive sense of uncertainty about the future. Factors that are contributing to these uneasy feelings are the possibility of a nuclear weapons capable North Korea, a politically unstable Indonesia that is suffering from communal violence, the potential of another financial crisis, and the possibility of a hegemonic People's Republic of China and Japan. Viewing these problems through Western eyes, a solution involving more American economic, political

² *Strategic Assessment 1995 - U.S. Security Challenges in Transition*, ed. Patrick Clawson, (Fort McNair, Washington D.C., Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1995), 1.

and security engagement seems simple. Combining these three elements of national power could mitigate the threat from North Korea and future potential hegemons and ensure a stable trading environment that is required by the poorer nations of the region to address internal problems. However, many in Asia are seeking a different solution that relies on more self-guidance and control. This drive for self-guidance and control comes at a time when the United States interest in Asia seems to be waning.

Despite high-level assurances from U.S. leaders and continued forward deployment of U.S. armed forces in Northeast Asia, there exists a broad perception in Asia that U.S. diplomatic and military power is in decline. While welcomed by some Asian nations, these perceptions raise doubts about the future of the U.S. role as the region's guarantor of stability. More importantly, many nations of Asia are looking towards greater inter-dependence among themselves to fill this void. This growing dependence on multilateral organizations such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and ASEAN Plus Three (APT) is having a diminishing effect on the amount of influence the United States has with many nations in the region.³

The growth of multilateral discussions is being fueled by three factors. First, the growing sense of nationalism and confidence is motivating these nations to seek “Asian Solutions” to “Asian” problems.⁴ Second, there is the growing perception that the United

³ The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) is a forum designed to foster constructive dialogue that addresses political and security issues of common interest to its members. The ARF members include all ten permanent ASEAN members and the United States, Australia, Canada, China, the European Union (EU), India, Japan, North Korea, Mongolia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Russia, and South Korea. ASEAN Plus Three (APT) is the term used to describe a segment of ASEAN’s annual meetings that include China, Japan and South Korea. The APT first met in 1999 to focus on trade problems that are common to its members.

⁴ The use of the terms “Asian Culture” and “Asian Values” is not intended as a western generalization of a complex region. These terms actually reflect the characterizations that are often used by the senior leadership of Asian nations when addressing the West, namely the US, in regional forums such as the ARF and ASEAN.

States is meddling in internal matters and trying to enforce Western values. Last, is the fear that the future may bring a hegemonic China or Japan that may threaten the smaller nations in the region. While the latter two factors are a result of external stimulus and perception, the first is a result of the natural maturation of states and its people best described by Samuel Huntington in his book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. In this book, Huntington points out that during the Cold War the world was “polarized along an ideological spectrum” that transcended cultural bounds.⁵ Huntington further states that in the absence of a greater ideological threat, often used to form partnerships, cultural differences will now become the basis for competition. Within Asia, Huntington sees a growing Sinocentric cultural block forming that will one day challenge the United States’ hegemony in the region.^{6, 7} Emerging from the trauma caused by the financial crises in 1997, Asian states are ready for a new relationship with their neighbors and the United States. The new and stronger intra-Asian dialogue will help the nations of Asia avoid having to rely on western support to recover from any future economic crisis. These new relationships will also be more inclusive, bringing ASEAN as a group into direct dialogue with countries of Northeast Asia. This new approach of seeking greater interdependent relationships among Asian states will change how the U.S. influences the region. It is my thesis that the growth of multilateralism in Asia is changing the influence the United States has over the region. In the end, the United States will be faced with a regional climate where bilateral agreements are

⁵ Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, (New York, NY, Simon & Schuster, 1996), 33.

⁶ Huntington, 184.

⁷ While I do not believe that these cultural differences between the U.S. and Asia will lead to conflict, as Huntington proposes, cultural differences will be a major factor in limiting U.S. influence in the region. Since cultural divisions are fueling many of these changes, I will not specifically address Australia or New Zealand, the only western culture nations residing in the Asia/Pacific region.

increasingly affected by intraregional relationships. These relationships founded in multilateral organizations will include non-traditional partners, be more varied, more fluid and less formal. In the following sections, I will discuss the changes in bilateral and multilateral relationships that will limit U.S. influence in the region. In the following chapters, I will address changes that have occurred in key countries in the region in which the U.S. has a strategic interest.

Chapter 2

The United States in East Asia

Despite public perception in the U.S., the United States is a Pacific power and has had a history of strong political, economic, security, and diplomatic ties to the East Asian region. American influence in the region dates from the late 18th century when the United States joined Britain and France to open China to trade with the west. In 1853, as trade with China increased, the U.S. moved to re-open trade with Japan, which had closed its doors to the west in the early 17th century.

Through the 18th and 19th centuries trade between East Asia and the west grew. To secure the important Pacific trade routes and interests, many western nations established forward naval bases in East Asia. By the late 19th century, the United States was the only major western nation not to have a naval base in Asia. Without a forward naval base, the United States could not maintain the naval presence needed to protect its merchant fleet and interests in the region. To remedy this problem the United States seized the Philippines during the Spanish-American war of 1898 and established its first naval base in the region. With the acquisition of the Philippines, the United States joined France, Britain, Portugal, Germany and Holland as colonial powers in East Asia.

Over the following thirty years, the United States allowed its influence in Asia to wane, while occasionally taking time, in the first decade of the 20th century, to protect its

interests in Asia during the Boxer rebellion in China and the nationalist uprising in the Philippines. From 1910 through the interwar period, U.S. foreign policy remained Eurocentric at the expense of stability in Asia. During this period, Japan grew in economic, political and military strength and was able to directly challenge the United States in East Asia, ultimately drawing the U.S. into World War II in 1941.

In the aftermath of World War II, the United States faced another great threat in Asia, the spread of communism. To counter this new threat and to ensure no other nation achieved hegemony in Asia, the U.S. entered into a series of bilateral defense agreements coupled with enormous aid packages to rebuild the infrastructures destroyed by the war. The United States would use Japan in Northeast Asia and the Philippines in Southeast Asia as the foundations for security and democracy. To promote democracy and self determination in the region, the United States granted the Philippines its independence in 1946 and pressured the Dutch to pull out of the Dutch East Indies in 1948. However, containment was not universally successful in every country. By late 1948, it was clear that no amount of economic or military aid could save the nationalist government in China from falling to communism. On October 1, 1949, Mao Tse-tung announced the establishment of the People's Republic of China. The U.S. goal of preventing the spread of communism in the region had failed.

Less than a year after the fall of China to communism, the United States policy of containing communism was challenged again when the Russian and Chinese backed North Korean army invaded the U.S. backed south in July 1950. After three years of fighting and a cost of over 1.6 million dead, a cease-fire was signed dividing the Korean

Peninsula on roughly the same lines it had been prior to hostilities.⁸ After the failure of western forces to unify the Korean Peninsula, communism continued to spread in Asia.

By 1964, the United States became heavily committed to fighting the spread of communism in the former French colony of French Indochina. From 1964 to 1973, the United States fought one of its most unpopular wars that divided the nation and claimed over 50,000 American lives. A little more than two years after the U.S. military withdrawal from Indochina, South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos would all fall to communism.

While the United States failed to stem communism in Indochina, U.S. economic policies bolstered by defense agreements with Thailand, South Korea, Japan, Australia, and the Philippines ensured it would spread no further. From 1975 to 1997, the capitalist economies of Asia grew at tremendous rates. These tremendous grow rates increased the size of the middle class in many of the nations allowing greater social stability. As trade between the United States and Asia grew, the U.S. economy began to take on an Asian flavor. Today, trade with East Asian nations keeps 2.5 million Americans working through imports of U.S. goods. The importance of Asia as a U.S. trading partner was appropriately stated as "America's heart is in Europe, but its wallet is in Asia".⁹ The recent economic turmoil in Asia has not changed this dynamic.

⁸ Rhodes Murphy, *A History of Asia*, 2d ed. (New York, NY, HarperCollins College Publishers, 1996), 388.

⁹ William Bodde, Senior Advisor to the Pacific Basin Economic Council, untitled remarks during a speech before the Economic Strategy Institute Luncheon Economic Strategy Institute, Washington, D.C., November 4, 1995.

Chapter 3

Contemporary Problems & Bilateral Dynamics

Economic Environment

"Today, no region in the world is more important for the United States than Asia and the Pacific. Tomorrow, in the 21st Century, no region will be as important."¹⁰ Since the mid-1970s, many Asian nations have taken advantage of the stable regional order to implement market and trade oriented economic policies. These policies have produced the most rapid rates of economic growth in history prior to the Asian Financial crisis of 1997. Despite this set back, growth is slowly returning to all but a few states. While final figures are still not available, all Asian nations, with the exception of Thailand and Indonesia, are expected to regain the output lost to the financial crisis by the end of 2000 and attain a 6.9% growth rate overall and 7.9% growth in the Newly Industrialized Economies (NIEs) of Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea. This recovery is not being fueled by investment from the United States or other western nations, but is being accomplished from within. This growing intraregional trade is having a positive effect on the smaller developing economies of Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand and the Philippines and is

¹⁰ Winston Lord, Statement at Senate Confirmation Hearings, U.S. Department of State Dispatch, Vol. 4, No. 14, April 1993.

expected to continue through 2001.¹¹

The Korean Peninsula

While the phrase “it’s the economy stupid” aptly describes the focus of many nations in the region, old Cold War security issues and new internal stability problems are still a major concern. Despite the recent South Korean and United States dialogue with North Korea, a state of war still exists between the two nations. From the United States’ perspective, the unresolved war between the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) is still the greatest threat to peace in Northeast Asia and is the basis for the continued U.S. military deployment in South Korea.¹²

For the past 40 years North Korea has maintained a large powerful military, “that is numerically superior in manpower, armor, and artillery, and is deployed in forward positions from which they could mount, with only minimal preparation, a strong offensive” into South Korea.¹³ Currently there are almost 1.7 million armed troops, to include 37,000 U.S. troops, maintaining an uneasy cease-fire on the 38th parallel dividing North and South Korea. The possibility of military confrontation here is one of the most tense and sensitive situations in the world. While the South has begun its return to the record breaking economic growth and development it had enjoyed during the 15 years before 1997, the North is bordering on economic and political collapse under the

¹¹ Asian Development Bank, *Asian Development Outlook, The World Economy, Developing Asia, and the Pacific*. Sep 2000. <<http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/ADO/2000/Update/default.asp>>, Accessed 26 December, 2000.

¹² Unites States’ Department of Defense, *The United States Security Strategy for the Asia Pacific Region 1998*, <<http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/easr98.html>>, Accessed 12 December, 2000.

¹³ United States’ Department of Defense, *2000 Report to Congress Military Situation on the Korean Peninsula*, 12 Sep 2000, <<http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Sep2000/korea09122000.html>>, Accessed 20 February, 2001.

dictatorial communist regime led by Kim Jong-il.

To become more prosperous Kim Jong-il has began a slow process of détente with South Korea and the United States in hopes of emulating China's economic model and breaking the mold he and his father, Kim il-Sung, had fostered for the hermit kingdom.¹⁴ Over the past year, Kim Jong-il has opened his government to numerous meetings with South Korean and American officials and has participated in the first ever meeting between the leaders of the north and south. However, in light of recent progress, there are still many obstacles between North Korea and achieving normal status as a global partner.

North Korea, despite its social and economic backwardness, has built the fourth largest army in the world and has promised to reunite the peninsula under its terms. This tension is heightened by the possible development of nuclear weapons and a missile program that threatens Japan and United States military forces stationed in East Asia. In a region that depends on stability for economic progress, North Korea, despite Kim Jong-il's recent gestures, is still a dangerous and unknown factor. However, regardless of the process, many believe the Korean Peninsula will eventually be reunified. If by force, which now seems unlikely, the price will be steep in terms American lives and could involve a possible conflict with China. If the process is peaceful, it is questionable whether a unified Korea will continue to desire a U.S. military presence.

Even with the threat of the North still looming over the South, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the United States to influence the ROK over issues concerning the deployment of U.S. military personnel amidst a climate of calls for a total withdrawal

¹⁴ Shin Yong-bae, "North Korea Sending Messages of Opening, Reform to U.S., *Korean Herald*, 23 January, 2001.

of U.S. forces coming from South Korean youth. This is clearly evident when events of the last year concerning security issues between South Korea and the United States are reviewed. The first issue is the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) that governs the relationship between the South Korean government and U.S. military forces. From 1996 until December 2000, negotiations between South Korean and U.S. representatives were at loggerheads over two issues. First, the ROK government's goal of increasing its control over the legal status the ROK judicial system has over U.S. service members accused of crimes. Second, the ROK government wants to insert an environmental protection clause that would ultimately curtail live ordnance training of U.S. forces.¹⁵ Sticking to their demands, South Korean negotiators emerged victorious as the U.S. side agreed to most of the changes, on 28 December 2000. In the past, renewal of the SOFA agreement was a relatively quick process where the United States determined and controlled the issues.

Another contentious security issue between the ROK and U.S. is over the range newly developed South Korean surface-to-surface missiles (SSMs) will be allowed to have. In the past, the United States has pressured the South Korean government to limit the range of its surface-to-surface missiles (SSMs) to 150km. Since 1995, the ROK government has sought to increase this range to 300km with a potential to reach 500km. The ROK's justification is that it wishes to develop missiles that can reach any target in North Korea, a technological feat easily within the grasp of ROK engineers. However, deployment of missiles with this extended range would have a negative impact on the

¹⁵ Shin Yong-bae, "Delegations Discuss Schedule For SOFA Talks", *Korean Herald*, 11 December 2000.

United States' policy of limiting the development of ballistic missiles.¹⁶ The introduction of extended range missiles may also have an unintended negative impact on South Korea's closest neighbors, China and Japan, which would fall within the combat range of these missiles. Despite the potential friction this issue is causing with the United States and its neighbors, ROK negotiators ultimately obtained an agreement from the U.S. to extend its SSM ranges in January 2001.¹⁷

The South Korean government is also looking beyond the United States for military equipment. Since 1998, the South Korean government has accepted over \$210 million dollars worth of Russian military equipment for loan repayment. By the end of 2001, the South Korean military is expected to accept more Russian equipment bringing the total to over \$710 million dollars. The equipment under consideration will likely include transport planes, refueling aircraft, decontamination equipment, helicopters, and hovercraft.¹⁸ The acquisition of this equipment coupled with South Korea's growing indigenous arm industry will further reduce the dependence on the U.S. military and the influence it has.

With evidence of a weakening U.S. influence in South Korea, what will it mean if unification does come? Does it bring peace to the region? A reunified Korea does not necessarily mean a more stable Northeast Asia. A unified Korea would likely be more nationalistic and view Japan and China, its historical enemies, as its primary threats.¹⁹

¹⁶ Shin Yong-bae, "Seoul, Washington Fail To Agree On Missile Range Issue", *Korean Herald*, September 19 2000.

¹⁷ Willis Witter, "South Korea Plans Enhanced Missiles", *The Washington Times*, January 18 2001.

¹⁸ Kang Seok-jae, "Defense Ministry Weighs Buying \$500 Mil. Worth Of Russian Weapons", *Korean Herald*, November 28 2000.

¹⁹ Dr. Alan Goldman and Mr. Scott Leeb, "A Regional Perspective" in *How They Fight: Armies of the World*, Asia Vol. 10, U.S. Army Intelligence and Threat Analysis Center, (Washington Navy Yard, Washington D.C., 1995). 2.

If any tensions arise between any of these Asian giants, it will seriously complicate any present and future agreements between the U.S. and Northeast Asian states. To prevent this the U.S. will need to maintain its presence on the Korean Peninsula for no other reason than to prevent any other power from achieving dominance in the region. Both China and Japan will feel less threatened by a Korea that maintains a large U.S. military presence. However, the newfound confidence brought on by the intra-Korean dialogue has also caused the South Korean government to look beyond its current adversary. The South Korean Defense Ministry defense-spending plan for 2001 departed from past plans in that it emphasized preparations for dealing with external threats. This is a dramatic shift in Asian strategic relations that will have a negative impact on U.S. influence over South Korea. The new outlook will not only raise concern in Japan and China, increasing the risk of confrontation, but may also bring South Korea's "long-standing dependence on the United States for security" to an end.²⁰

South Korea's concerns over issues such as SOFA, arms procurement, the environment, and preparations of potential future threats will run counter to the status the United States enjoyed in South Korea during the cold war. This new direction is based on confidence as a nation and stems from the "new found nationalism" among younger professionals in South Korea.²¹ Additionally, Huntington's portrayal of rising cultural differences between Asians and the west is receiving more attention as South Korean's attempt to limit western influence in their society becomes more evident.²²

²⁰ Stratfor, "Korea-Defense", Global Intelligence Update - 5 October 2000, <www.stratfor.com/asia/countries/southkorea/default.htm>, Accessed 6 October 2000.

²¹ Dr. Kurt Campbell, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Affairs, speech at the Defense Intelligence Agency, Washington D.C., Oct 23, 1995.

²² Donald Stone Macdonald, *The Koreans, Contemporary Politics and Society*, 3rd ed. (Boulder CO, Westview Press, 1996), 15.

China and its “Rogue” Province Taiwan

The most discussed event for the future Asian security environment is the rise of China as an economic and military power and whether "China will adopt a policy of external expansion".²³ In the post cold war era, China viewed this new world order as a uni-polar one, with the U.S. on top, "and with the potential to be more hostile" towards China than it was during the bi-polar era.²⁴ After the cold war, the rapid growth of China had many Pacific nations concerned about the direction China may choose. This rapid growth drew increased interest and concern from the United States and some of the ASEAN states as China sought to readdress territorial claims in the South China Sea. Despite the dynamic growth, a critical issue is whether China can sustain this high growth rate in the face of potential political instability or civil unrest. Publicly or privately, most Asian nations view future Chinese hegemony in the region as one of the most undesirable scenarios that could occur.

In addition to having the fastest growing economy in the world, China also has one of the fastest growing military budgets as well. In the past 12 years, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) has enjoyed double-digit budget growth.²⁵ While many western countries have emphasized paring down their military budgets, China's economic success continues to fuel an across the board buildup in military capabilities. With its new found economic might, Chinese military spending has increased 140 percent over

²³ China's Post-Cold War National Security Strategy, *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, Beijing, China, August 1995, 2.

²⁴ Alfred D. Wilhelm, Jr. *The Chinese at the Negotiating Table*. (National Defense University Press, Washington, D.C., February, 1994), xxvii.

²⁵ USCINCPAC Virtual Information Center, "Special Report: China's Defense Budget and Arms Procurement Priorities", 12 December 2000, <<http://www.vic-info.org/RegionsTop.nsf/webrecent?OpenView>>, Accessed 15 December 2000.

the past six years and "will continue to show the largest increases" in the region.²⁶

This military modernization is not threatening in and of itself since China's military equipment is woefully obsolete by western standards. The threat to regional security becomes a concern when we look at the type of equipment being purchased and the reorganization of the forces to utilize the new equipment. China's modernization efforts have focused on the air and naval forces as well as developing a combined arms rapid deployment force capable of projecting power in the region to protect economic interests. Despite Chinese attempts to play down its military modernization, the nations of East Asia feel directly threatened by this event.

With the end of the Cold War and the severely diminished Russian naval threat to the region, an explanation of why China is pursuing this military modernization is necessary. Publicly China justifies its increased military budget as a means to modernize its outdated defense forces. However, three possible scenarios threatening China's interests are actually driving its military modernization; "a declaration of independence by Taiwan, or PRC preemption of such a possibility; war on the Korean Peninsula arising from either Pyongyang's aggression or internal collapse; and accelerated Japanese defense spending".²⁷ While there is a possibility that any one or all of these scenarios could occur, the possibility of war on the Korean Peninsula is most likely. However, what is most alarming is that if any one of these events occurs, it could bring Chinese and U.S. military forces in direct contact.

Unlike its waning influence with traditional cold war allies of Northeast and

²⁶ *Strategic Assessment 1995*, 21.

²⁷ Karl W. Eikenberry. *Does China Threaten Asia-Pacific Regional Stability?*, Parameters, US Army War College Quarterly Spring 1995,(Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA), 96.

Southeast Asia, the United States influence within China has increased over the last 25 years. For the United States the impetus for this was driven by the need to play China against the former Soviet Union, and then the simple approach of diplomatically and economically engaging a nuclear power that also had the world's largest population. For China, the engagement was driven by the need to modernize its society and economy. To achieve this goal, China recognized it would first have to develop workable relations with the United States before other Western powers and regional neighbors, such as Japan, would follow suit. In the last two decades, China has worked vigorously to win international acceptance and recognition as the sole government of China, understood by the Chinese to include Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan.

Despite the thawing relations, there are still many issues between the two countries that continue to strain relations. Some of these issues, such as Theater Missile Defense (TMD), the United States Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), weapons proliferation, stability on the Korean Peninsula, U.S. troop deployments in Asia and the South China Sea have a regional context that may directly involve other nations. In addition, there are also bi-lateral issues, such as human rights and free-trade, that may be seen by other nations as a U.S. intrusion into the sovereign rights of a nation. No matter what the issue, China will likely continue its policy that attempts to limit or exclude involvement by the United States when dealing with these issues. In doing so, China hopes to be viewed by its neighbors as a benevolent leader that wants peace and prosperity and seeks to protect the internal rights of nations. This stance will be in keeping with China's self perceived role as a regional power thus reducing the influence of the U.S. in the region.

While China may seem willing to discuss or negotiate a solution to many of these

problems, China will remain adamant concerning its sovereign rights over its “rogue province”, Taiwan. The Taiwan issue alone poses the greatest threat to U.S.-China relations. For over two decades, United States’ policy in this matter has sought a peaceful resolution that is acceptable to both sides. In dealings with both Beijing and Taipei, U.S. attempts at trying to accommodate both sides often results in a “catch 22”. When the U.S. sells high technology weapons, such as F-16 C/Ds, KNOX class frigates, and PATRIOT missile defense systems, relations with Beijing are reversed. In addition, when the U.S. restricts official exchanges between Taiwan and the U.S., reaffirming its “one China” policy, Taipei often protests.²⁸

The United States’ “one China” policy, affirmed in the 1972 Shanghai Communiqué, the 1978 Normalization Agreement, and the 1982 Joint Declaration on U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, recognizes Beijing as the sole government of China.²⁹ However clear this policy may seem, it is often tested, as it was recently in 1995 and again in 1996 when U.S. naval forces were deployed to the Taiwan Straits in response to China’s provocative military exercises near the Taiwan coast. These events coupled with the U.S. bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade and the possible inclusion of Taiwan in a TMD umbrella have created a more combative China when dealing with regional security issues involving the United States.

China is also becoming more important to the Asia-Pacific region for ensuring stability. In a recent White House publication on trade issues, China was recognized as

²⁸ Alice Hung, Reuters, “Taiwanese President Chides U.S. On Beijing”, *Washington Post*, December 7, 2000, 31.

²⁹ Michel Oksenberg, “The American View of China”, in *Preparing America’s Foreign Policy for the 21st Century*, ed. David L. Boren and Edward J. Perkins (Norman OK, University of Oklahoma Press 1999), 65.

“playing an increasingly active and constructive role in Asian security and stability.”³⁰ In the past two years, China has taken an active role in engaging in security talks to ensure stability in South Asia and the Korean Peninsula and has actively participated in confidence building measures in Southeast Asia. In the end, China hopes to remain economically engaged with the U.S. while offering the rest of Asia an alternative to U.S. influence in the region.

Japan

For over fifty years, the relationship between the United States and Japan has been the foundation for security in the region and has helped Japan to become the world’s second largest economy. Since the end of World War II, the U.S. has maintained a military presence in Japan. The foundation for this relationship and military presence is a bi-lateral security agreement that obligates the U.S. to come to Japan’s aid in the event of any direct military threat. This agreement has often been described as “the single most important” in the Pacific region.³¹ This security pact is especially important to the Japanese because Japan’s Constitution limits its military to a size that is appropriate for defense only and forever relinquishes the right to make war. These limits force Japan to maintain a close security alliance with the United States to protect its interests. Unlike other nations who are compensated by the U.S. or pay only a small portion of a U.S. military commitment, the Japanese pay over fifty percent of the cost to maintain the U.S. presence.

However, despite the importance of the U.S. military presence in Japan, to both

³⁰ China Trade Relations Working Group, “China and Regional Security”, White House, April 6, 2000, <<http://www.chinapntr.gov/factsheets/Regional%20Security.htm>>, Accessed December 17, 2000.

³¹ Adm. Charles R. Larson, Uncertainties. Turbulence Head Concerns, Defense 92, July/August 1992. 35.

nations, this security arrangement is also being tested. Sparked by the brutal rape of a 12-year-old Japanese girl by three American servicemen in Okinawa in 1995 and subsequent criminal acts by other U.S. servicemen, the citizens of Okinawa have called for closure of the U.S. bases. While far from being able to accomplish this goal, this out cry has forced serious concessions on the part of the United States. Since 1995, U.S. military training on Okinawa has been severely curtailed, to include a total moratorium on firing artillery. In addition, the United States Marine Corps has agreed to close its only air station, located in Futenma, when a suitable location can be found further away from heavily populated areas.³²

The recent economic recession in Japan is also having a negative impact on U.S. influence. Many Japanese are resentful of the economic prosperity the U.S. has seen in the last decade while Japan's economy flounders. In this new period of financial constraints, more Japanese are questioning the level of financing they should budget to support the U.S. presence. Additionally, in Japanese media there has been an increase in calls for Japan to distance itself from the United States and reengage in Asia.³³

Now, Japan is expanding its engagement with militaries from countries in the region and is strongly considering amending its constitution to allow for greater military roles in the region. This expansion of Japanese military engagement is partially driven by the common perception that the U.S. has spent too much time in the past decade cultivating China as a strategic partner. Recent statements by Yasuhisa Shiozaki, head of the Japanese government's foreign policy panel, indicated that Japan felt "American

³² "U.S. Marines To Reduce Drills Held In Okinawa", *Japan Times*, September 20, 2000.

³³ Takashi Kawachi, "A New Backlash Against American Influence", *Japan Echo*, Vol. 25, No. 2, April 1998 <<http://www.japanecho.co.jp/docs/html/250213.html>>, Accessed 2 December 2000.

policy for the last couple of years has put more stress on China".³⁴ This perception of a U.S. swing toward China as a strategic partner has encouraged Japanese officials to believe "Japan should develop a force that is able to operate more independently of the United States".³⁵

Japan remains the cornerstone for U.S. security engagement in the region. Japan's acceptance of U.S. military bases and financial support allows the United States to remain militarily engaged in the region with minimal costs. However, this strong relationship loses some of its cohesion every time a U.S. serviceman breaks Japanese laws or a senior U.S. official offends Japanese pride. It is now becoming more difficult to justify America's position in Japan, as the Japanese society increasingly questions the need for U.S. bases.

Southeast Asia

Toward the end of the cold war and until late 1997, much of Southeast Asia experienced an unprecedented economic boom. Much of this prosperity was a direct result of the stability brought to the region by the United States and its bi-lateral security arrangements with the Republic of Philippines and the Kingdom of Thailand as well as greater economic cooperation among regional states. However, this growth came to an end in 1997 with the beginning of the Asian financial crisis. This crisis highlighted the weak and corrupt systems on which this economic growth was founded and re-exposed historical animosity between Southeast Asian states and cultures.

Now many of the Southeast Asian states are slowly emerging from near financial

³⁴ Michael Richardson, "Japan And Australia Expect Gains In Asia-Pacific Security", *International Herald Tribune*, December 18, 2000.

³⁵ *Strategic Assessment 1995*, 29.

ruin and taking steps to ensure it does not happen again. The process many nations are taking is a combination of Western ideas, brought in by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, and historical Asian solutions that are causing friction with the west. Failure to understand the Asian culture and attempting to force the assimilation of western ideals has always been a problem of the United States when dealing with the east. The American belief that a system of western democracy should be universal and will fix all ills is creating animosity between former friends that are now viewing it as cultural imperialism. In Confucian societies, order is placed above freedom and duties above rights. It is this ideology of “civilized despotism” that is difficult for western nations to grasp and often comes in conflict with western financial institutions.³⁶ Two of Southeast Asia’s power icons, Lee Kwan Yew of Singapore and Prime Minister Dr. Mahatir bin Mohamad of Malaysia counter this view by relying on strict governmental controls to ensure stability and economic prosperity. These leaders further echo that American style democracy leads to social decay and disorder. While these two leaders are often at odds when addressing Singapore/Malaysia relations, they share many views concerning the negative impact western culture can have on an Asian society.

Within Southeast Asia, the United States knew no closer ally than the Philippines. After WW II, the U.S. granted the Philippines independence in 1946. Since then, security ties between the two nations have been based on three military/security agreements. Under a military basing agreement, concluded in 1947, the Philippine government granted the U.S. the right to develop, maintain, and occupy several military installations on Philippine soil. From these bases, the United States provided security for

³⁶ Walter Mondale, “Japan and East Asia”, in *Preparing America’s Foreign Policy for the 21st Century*, ed. David L. Boren and Edward J. Perkins, (Norman OK, University of Oklahoma Press 1999), 77.

the Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs) in the South China Sea and provided support to U.S. forces fighting the Vietnam War. A second agreement was the basis for security assistance. In 1951, a third agreement, the Mutual Defense Treaty, pledged the U.S. protection of Philippine sovereignty against external aggression.

Although the Mutual Defense Treaty remains intact, U.S.-Philippine relations are now a shell of what they used to be. In a move that surprised the United States, the Philippine Senate terminated the basing agreement in September 1991 forcing a total U.S. military withdrawal 14 months later. After the U.S. withdrawal, relations between the two nations reached an all time low since the Philippine rebellion in the early 20th century. In 1995, U.S. military engagement in the Philippines continued to weaken when all military exercises were stopped until a Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), similar to a SOFA, was negotiated. As with the South Korean SOFA the government of the Philippines has pushed for greater legal control over U.S. service members and environmental protections during U.S. exercises. In 1999, the Philippine Senate finally ratified the VFA, allowing U.S.-Philippine bilateral exercises to resume.

Even today, when the Philippines is being rocked by a resurgence in the Muslim and Communists insurgencies further weakening its military, the Philippines continues its go-slow policy when dealing with the United States. This go-slow attitude is a result of the Philippines placing greater importance on ensuring good relations with its neighbors, occasionally at the expense of the United States. In September 2000, Manila questioned the reasoning behind U.S. attempts to initiate a string of military exercises in the region with other East Asian states. The trepidation shown by the Philippines was out of

concern for offending other Asian states, principally China, not included in the exercises.³⁷

Today the United States has to deal with the Philippines not as former suzerain but as an equal. The Philippine leadership of today, despite its own continued levels of corruption, still holds the United States responsible for the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos. The Philippines is taking a greater role in ASEAN and is looking to its neighbors for greater support in strengthening its financial institutions. The Philippines continues to support engagement with the United States, but will be more inclined to weigh all interactions against the impact they may have on its regional neighbors.

Thailand is the second country within Southeast Asia, which has a defense treaty with the United States. Official U.S.-Thai relations date from 1833 when the two countries signed the Treaty of Amity and Commerce, the first U.S. treaty with an Asian nation. Since World War II, the United States and Thailand have developed close relations in many fields, reflected in several bilateral treaties. In 1954, the United States and Thailand were two of the eight signatories of the Manila Pact that was the basis for the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). This treaty provides that, in the event of armed attack in the treaty area, which includes Thailand, each member would act to meet the common danger. While SEATO has been defunct since 1977, the Manila Pact remains the foundation for the Thai-U.S. security commitments.³⁸

³⁷ "Manila Not Keen On Joining War Games", *Manila Times*, September 13, 2000.

³⁸ United States Department of State, *Background Notes: Thailand*, October 2000, <http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes/thailand_0010_bgn.html>, Accessed 15 February 2001.

Like the Philippines, Thailand has modeled its armed forces on that of the United States. In addition, until the early 1990s, Thailand purchased all of its military equipment from western nations, mainly the United States. However, in 1992, Thailand entered into an arms deal with China to purchase over 500 tanks and armored vehicles to upgrade its land forces. The Thai navy has since purchased four frigates from China to upgrade its navy. The purchase of this equipment is having a limiting effect on U.S. influence within the Thai military and shows a greater Thai willingness to rely on its regional neighbors for military equipment.

Over the past decade, Thailand's ties to China, Burma, and Cambodia have been a cause of friction within Thai-U.S. diplomacy. In 1994, Thailand rejected the forward basing of U.S. Maritime Preposition Ships (MPS) for fear of a backlash from its regional neighbors. This forced the United States to station these ships in Guam, increasing the reaction times to potential hot spots in East Asia. In 1997, Thailand voted to bring Burma into ASEAN despite strong U.S. protests and sanctions against Burma. Thai leaders were adamant that dealing with Burma required an 'Asian solution'. In response to U.S. protests, then Thai Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh stated that this "will have no impact on Burma's bid to become a member of ASEAN".³⁹ Later that same year, Thai diplomats joined Malaysian Prime Minister Mahatir in singling out the United States' for creating the Asian financial crisis as an attempt to "punish ASEAN for extending membership to Myanmar".⁴⁰ This loyalty in support of other ASEAN

³⁹ "ASEAN's stance towards Burma unchanged by beefed up U.S. sanctions", *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, 23 April, 1997, <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/54/038.html>, Accessed 21 December 2000.

⁴⁰ "Governments decry U.S., European speculators", *Workers World*, 14 August, 1997, <<http://workers.org>>, Accessed November 15 2000.

members extends to Cambodia. Since the withdrawal of Vietnam from Cambodia, Thailand has taken a much more moderate stance toward Cambodia. This support for its neighbor is often contrary to U.S. goals when addressing human rights, democracy and genocide issues resulting from the Khmer Rouge era. Like the Philippines, Thailand is now weighing engagement with the U.S. against the impact it may have on its neighbors.

Since 1965, Indonesia has been a strong supporter of United States containment policies against communism. The support grew into strong economic ties under the rule of former Indonesian President Suharto. This shared goal of containing communism grew into strong bilateral military ties by the mid-1980s. These ties were important to the United States because of Indonesia's critical role in the region. Indonesia is the world's 4th most populous and largest Muslim nation and the Indonesian archipelago sits astride the strategically important SLOCs leading into the South China Sea. Indonesia's strategic importance to the region and the United States was recognized by President Eisenhower in the 1950s when he said that 'what happens in Indonesia will have an impact in Indiana', a statement recently echoed by U.S. Defense Secretary Cohen.⁴¹

In 1998, U.S.-Indonesian relations were severely strained when the financial crisis ended the 32 year rule of President Suharto and plunged the nation into chaos. After the fall of Suharto, the Indonesian government resented the IMF and World Bank's restructuring of the Indonesian banking sector and governmental budget. This restructuring forced the Indonesian government to end or curtail many governmental subsidies on food and energy. As the financial crisis continued, the Indonesian poor and middle class began to blame the new Indonesian government, which quickly shifted the

⁴¹ Tom Plate, "U.S.-Asia Relations Must Not Be Ignored, *Honolulu Advertiser*, December 17, 2000.

responsibility to the IMF and World Bank. This animosity grew into anti-U.S. sentiment, further straining relations between the two nations.

Relations between the United States and Indonesia hit an all time low in October 1999, when President Clinton decided “to cut off military ties to Indonesia in outrage over its army's involvement in a brutal militia rampage in East Timor”.⁴² As a result of the strained relations, the Indonesia government and people are finding it easier to blame the United States for their problems and portray advice from the U.S. as the western meddling in Indonesian matters. Because of this anti-U.S. paranoia, both the Indonesian government and its people question all interaction with the United States.

The United States influence in Indonesia is unlikely to regain its former status anytime soon. Recent remarks by U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell giving Australia the lead in dealing with Indonesia have increased the gap between the U.S. and Indonesia. While this new policy shift is a U.S. endorsement of Australia's stance toward Indonesia, it further amplifies the Eurocentric attitude the U.S. displays towards Asian states.⁴³

Singapore remains one of the strongest supporters of U.S. military engagement in the Asia while at the same time one of the strongest critics when it comes to the United States' policy of western democratization. Singapore, whose economy was largely unaffected by the recent Asian financial crisis, remains the regions economic powerhouse. As Singapore's largest export market, the United States is key to

⁴² Dana Priest, “Standing Up to State And Congress, The Proconsuls: Tension and Teamwork in Indonesia”, *Washington Post*, September 30, 2000, 1.

⁴³ The Economist, *To Arms*, 3 February 2001, <http://www.economist.com/displayStory.cfm?Story_ID=492836>, Accessed 18 February 2001.

Singapore's economic well-being. Singapore's strong support for a continued U.S. military presence in the region stems from the precarious position Singapore has as a small Chinese state in a 'sea' of Malay Muslims. Given its relative size and frequent periods of anti-Chinese violence in Malaysia and Indonesia, Singapore feels U.S. engagement is essential. Since the early 1970s, Singapore and the United States have maintained a strong military bilateral training schedule. This close relationship has made Singapore dependent on U.S. military equipment for homeland defense. Within the Singaporean air force, the majority of the front line fighters are of U.S. design, such as the F-16. Almost half of Singapore's F-16s remain permanently stationed in the United States for training.

In 1992, Singapore's Prime Minister Goh agreed to the permanent stationing of a U.S. Naval logistics command and the expanded use of Singapore facilities by U.S. military forces formerly deployed in the Philippines. Singapore is also building a new pier that is specifically designed to handle the large U.S. aircraft carriers.⁴⁴ Singapore sees a continued U.S. military presence in the region as key to maintaining stability for economic growth and as a strong counter balance to China and Japan and its closest neighbors, Malaysia and Indonesia.

While U.S.-Singapore defense relations remain strong, there is often disagreement and friction between the two nations regarding human rights, democracy and Singapore's engagement with Burma. Singapore's Lee Kwan Yew views the United States as culturally decadent and has objected in the past to American protests over Singapore's

⁴⁴ Singapore Berth For U.S. Military, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, September 21, 2000 issue, <http://www.feer.com/_0009_21/p10.html>, Accessed November 22, 2000.

detention of political dissidents. In 1994, relations with the United States were temporarily strained when Singapore authorities imprisoned and caned a U.S. teenager convicted of vandalism. Singapore also views itself, as do many of its neighbors, as a model that can be used for economic growth while avoiding American style liberal social and political openness. A strong supporter of Asian integration, Singapore feels U.S. attitudes towards human rights and political freedoms are a misapplication of western values. This is especially evident in Singapore's close dealings with the military junta in Burma. However, in the future, Singapore will remain a strong supporter of the U.S. military presence in the region while at the same time strongly advocating Asian integration. This policy will likely continue to cause friction between the two nations.

Perceptions of U.S. Military Commitment

Unlike Europe, historical animosities among the nations of East Asia have prevented the formation of a multilateral security agreement similar to NATO. Instead, there are a number of bi-lateral security agreements between the U.S. and East Asian nations designed to address the security concerns of those particular nations. In the past, the majority of the U.S. bi-lateral security agreements in Asia were designed to reinforce the U.S. "policy of containment against the Soviet Union" and the Peoples Republic of China.⁴⁵ Even in the aftermath of the Cold War, these security agreements remain key to peace and stability in the region.

Since the U.S. annexation of the Philippines in 1898, the United States armed forces have maintained a continuous forward deployed presence in the Pacific. In the

⁴⁵ John W. Mountcastle's forward to Thomas L. Wilborn's *Stability Structures, and U.S. Policy for East Asia and the Pacific*, Strategic Studies Institute U.S. Army War College, (Carlisle Barracks, PA, November 5, 1994). iii.

past, economic necessity and the historical threats presented by Japan, the Soviet Union, China, and North Korea have justified the costs of this presence, in both lives and money. Often, in order to maintain its presence and enforce a containment policy against the Soviet Union and China, the U.S. has entered into bi-lateral agreements with Asian nations where "human rights and democratic development" were overlooked.⁴⁶ In the past, the U.S. believed that containing the communist threat was more important than supporting democratic movements. Examples of this policy include the U.S. backed dictatorial regime of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines and the repressive governments of South Korea, South Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Indonesia and Taiwan.

With the demise of the Soviet Union, renewed détente between North and South Korea, and the People's Republic of China's pre-occupation with internal stability and economic growth, the threat to Asia is not so easily identified. Accompanying this is the uncertainty in the U.S. Congress and among the general American public over the costs associated with maintaining forces and facilities in the region. Even though a majority of Asian nations acknowledges that the U.S. military presence in Asia is vital to security, few are willing to allow any sizeable U.S. presence on their soil. This became evident after the 1991 denial by the Philippines government of continued U.S. basing in the Philippines and the 1994 refusal by Thailand to allow U.S. pre-positioning ships to be stationed permanently in Thailand. There is also a segment of the Japanese populace, which questions the relevance of U.S. military power in the region and specifically a U.S. presence on Japanese soil.

However, the people calling for U.S. partial or total withdrawal from the region

⁴⁶ Inis Claude, Sheldon Simon, and Douglas Stuart. *Collective Security in Europe and Asia*. Strategic Studies Institute U.S. Army War College, (Carlisle Barracks, PA, March 2, 1992). 29.

do not understand what the U.S. military presence means to the region. The U.S. military presence and security assistance in Asia has "helped forge bi-lateral defense relationships fundamental to regional security".⁴⁷ This regional security was in turn translated into bi-lateral and multi-lateral economic assistance that has helped the developing nations of East Asia. Even though U.S. influence within Asia is eroding, it is still the dominant economic and military power in the Pacific region. The U.S. armed forces stationed in East Asia have a positive, stabilizing influence on the entire Far East by playing the balancer between nations who might seek greater military power to protect their interests. The stability the U.S. armed forces bring to the region has been acknowledged by most nations of the region, including North Korea.⁴⁸ The primary reason why the U.S. military is accepted in Asia is its "lack of imperial ambition" that makes it a trusted partner.⁴⁹ Additionally, the U.S. military presence, combined with its nuclear umbrella has acted as a "security guarantee" for the entire region.⁵⁰

From the perspective of the United States', "national interests demand deep engagement" in East Asia.⁵¹ The future economic well being of the U.S. is dependent upon access to the markets of East Asia. This access is guaranteed by ensuring a stable political, economic and military environment. The U.S. armed forces provide this assurance. Without a U.S. presence in the region, ancient ethnic grudges could resurface

⁴⁷ Richard H. Solomon, Statement before the East Asian and Pacific Affairs Subcommittee of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, May 17, 1991.

⁴⁸ Jane Perlez, "South Korean Says North Agrees U.S. Troops Should Stay, *New York Times*, September 11, 2000.

⁴⁹ U.S. Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, *America and the Asia-Pacific Future*, Address to the Asia Society, New York City, May 27, 1994.

⁵⁰ Andrew Mack, *Security Cooperation in Northeast Asia: Problems and Prospects*, Journal of Northeast Asia Studies 11, no. 2 Summer 1993, 30.

⁵¹ Joseph S. Nye, Jr. *The Case for Deep Engagement*. Foreign Affairs July/August 1995, Council on Foreign Relations, Inc., 90.

and undermine stability and the interests of the United States in the process. From the point of view of most regional states, the U.S. fulfills its most valuable security function, just by being there, and "any dilution of American commitment *could* severely damage East Asia's confidence".⁵²

For both the U.S. and East Asia, the continued American military presence is not only important now, but also for the future. Even in an age where the United States fears no near-term military competitor, American military presence has a calming effect that balances fears of the rise of Chinese military might, a reunified nationalistic Korea, and the possibility of a Japanese military resurgence.

However, there is more than an increasing awareness of cultural divide, mentioned by Huntington, that is influencing the attitude change in East Asia. The past dependence on the U.S. military and fear that it is slowly retracting is driving East Asia towards multilateralism and greater intraregional dependence. Since 1990, the U.S. Navy's deployments to the region have been reduced by 40 percent with the other armed services experiencing similar cuts.⁵³ With the administration of President Bush promising to review all military commitments, any further perceived withdrawal from the regions will reinforce these trends. Actions taken by East Asian nations to ensure stability of the region may evolve into less dependence on the United States.

⁵² Fidel V. Ramos, President, Republic of the Philippines, speech quoted in Manila Business World, October 27, 1995, 2.

⁵³ Richardson.

Chapter 4

The Rise of Multilateralism and its Effect on U.S. Influence

In the past, the majority of the non-communist states of East Asia depended on the United States to ensure political, economic, and physical security of the region. This dependence gave the U.S. substantial influence within many nations of the region. However, with increased regional stability, growing self-defense capabilities, an increase in anti-U.S. sentiment, and recent decline of U.S. forces over the past decade, the preeminence of the U.S. as the region's caretaker and sage is now in question. This new view of the U.S. is driven by three major perceptions that are causing Asian nations to look for increased intraregional interactions to address regional problems.

The first perception is that the United States is becoming increasing involved in the daily political, social and economic lives of the region, which translates into cultural colonialisms. As stated previously, almost all Asian nations support a continued U.S. military presence and economic engagement in the region.⁵⁴ This presence and engagement creates an environment of stability where economic growth may flourish. It is beyond presence and engagement that many nations draw the line regarding U.S.

⁵⁴ The nations of East Asia support U.S. military presence in the region in three ways; first, Japan, South Korea and Singapore support the permanent basing of U.S. forces on their home soil; second, the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Brunei, and Malaysia support U.S. presence by hosting bilateral training events between U.S. and host nation forces; third, China support U.S. military presence by hosting multiple U.S. ship visits every year.

influence. Within countries such as Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea and Japan, many leaders and segments of the general population resent the United States' daily interactions regarding internal political and economic policies. The U.S. views these interactions as guidance while Asian nations view it as intruding into their internal affairs.

The second perception is that the United States is still too Eurocentric. From the perspective of East Asia, a U.S. policy of disengagement seems more evident. In 1991, the Philippine Senate voted not to renew the long- standing military bases agreement with the United States. There were a number of reasons why the United States decided not to try to renegotiate the agreement, but one of the main reasons was that after the fall of communism in Europe, the Soviet Union was no longer "a major Asian Power"⁵⁵. Many Asians, to include some Filipinos, believed the U.S. was not forceful enough during the military basing negotiations and that if the U.S. really wanted to keep U.S. forces in the Philippines it could have reached an agreement. Then in 1995 the United State's began to prod the Japanese government "to defend its 1,000 nautical-mile sea-lanes" so the U.S. Navy would be relieved of this duty, a move which initially caused great concern in China and the Republic of Korea.⁵⁶ Then, in 1999, with the U.S. military heavily committed in the Balkans, the United States disappointed many Asian nations by not taking a greater role and providing ground troops to bring peace to East Timor.⁵⁷ These instances along with the often-discussed U.S. military drawdown in Asia have many

⁵⁵ Patrick M. Mayerchak. *East Asia and the Western Pacific*. (Harpers Ferry, WV, Stryker-Post Publications, 1994) v.

⁵⁶ U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense, Joseph Nye, Interview in September 5, 1995 issue of *Asahi* in Tokyo Japan, 7.

⁵⁷ In October 1999, before the establishment of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), the governments of Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines voiced disappointment and concern at the heavily Australian dominated UNTAET and the lack of U.S. participation.

Asian leaders concerned about the level of U.S. military commitment to the region.

To Americans, evidence of a waning U.S. commitment in Asia may seem absurd, but the fact is that the United States military is largely organized for Eurocentric warfare. This statement becomes clear in the following quote from a study conducted for the U.S. Under Secretary of Defense:

Although the allocation of US military assets between Europe and Asia is about equal, planning for engagement in the two regions is not. Planning attention remains heavily focused on Europe where there are few foreseeable threats. Europe is the preferred destination for top officers, and US command staffs in Europe are more elaborate and better-manned. The US command structure for Europe holds almost a 4-to-1 advantage over Asia in flag officers. Approximately 85 percent of the military officers in language training currently are learning European languages, while few study Chinese, Thai, Vietnamese, Persian, Hindi, Urdu, Uighur or any of the languages or dialects of Indonesia, to name some of the most obvious deficiencies.⁵⁸

The third perception is based on the increasing western dominance over economic globalization. Despite the size of its regional economy, Asian nations are becoming increasingly disenchanted with western dominated economic structures and world financial institutions. While Asian nations are embracing the global economy, many are still worried that Asia's management of globalization may "lead to tensions with the United States". To avoid an increase in tensions, Asian nations believe the west will have to accept regional concerns that globalization may threaten cultural and social identities.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Naval War College, Summer Study for the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy) 1999 *Summer Study Final Report: Asia 2025*, 25 July – 4 August 1999 (Newport, RI, Naval War College, 1999), 48.

⁵⁹ Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, *Globalization in Asia: Getting the Breeze Without the Bugs*, report from the conference on Globalization and Regional Security: Asian Perspectives, February 23-25, 1999 Honolulu, HI, <http://www.apcss.org/Report_Globalization_in_Asia.html>, Accessed November 4, 2000.

These perceptions combined with growing nationalism are causing Asian nations to shore-up current multilateral organizations and form new ones. The dominant multilateral organization in Asia is ASEAN. ASEAN was formed in 1967 to foster stability, progress and prosperity in the region. ASEAN's membership includes its original members, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, and has now expanded to include Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Burma, and Cambodia. Recognizing it was severely weakened by the Asian financial crisis ASEAN is now trying to increase its strength and relevance by greater intraregional dialogue. ASEAN is now placing greater emphasis on expanding subordinate forums, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Plus Three (APT) and the yearly Post Ministerial Conferences (PMC), and is setting a climate for dealing with non-Asian nations from a unified stance. Advancing ASEAN's role in the region became a key topic during the sixth ASEAN summit. During this summit, held in Hanoi Vietnam in December 1998, ASEAN published the Hanoi Plan that contained the following two initiatives directed at diminishing western influence:

Promote public awareness of the ARF process and the need for ASEAN's role as the primary driving force in respective ASEAN Member Countries.

Revitalize ASEAN's relations with Dialogue Partners on the basis of equality, non-discrimination and mutual benefit.⁶⁰

These initiatives, aimed at increasing ASEAN's status and leveling the diplomatic playing field between the west and ASEAN, is a step toward greater dependence on the ARF for addressing security issues.

⁶⁰ Hanoi Plan, published at 6th ASEAN Summit, 15-16 December 1998, Hanoi, Vietnam, <<http://www.asean.com>>, Accessed November 21, 2000.

Established in 1994, the ARF promotes peace and development in a diverse region and acts as an official consultative forum on Asia-Pacific security issues, the first of its kind. Its membership spans the Asia-Pacific region and includes the United States. The need for this type of forum arose from the change in security dynamics of the cold war. Before 1990, stability in Southeast Asia rested on bilateral mutual defense or engagements agreements between the United States and many ASEAN states. In post cold-war Southeast Asia, there now was a need to address diverse issues that were not always of key concern to the United States. The ARF is now the forum used to address security issues in Asia, a task that was once the sole responsibility of the United States.

The PMC is held shortly after the ASEAN Ministerial Meetings (AMM) and is used to relay decisions and initiatives made by the AMM to dialogue partners. The PMC currently has contains 10 dialogue partners that includes the United States, Japan, South Korea, China and the European Union (EU). The PMC focuses on international economics, political issues and on transnational issues, such as crime, narcotics, trafficking in persons, environment, and health. By using the PMC to address these issues, the ASEAN nations hope to present a united voice when dealing with dialogue members.

The APT is the newest of ASEAN forums and the only one not to include the United States. The APT is a forum where ASEAN states meet as a group to discuss economic and security issues effecting both Northeast and Southeast Asia with China, Japan and South Korea. Since its first meeting in 1997, the APT has met annually and is increasing the dialogue between member nations and in the absence of any U.S.

interference.

In Northeast Asia historical animosities towards Japan for its aggression in World War II, still prevent the formation of an ASEAN type forum. However, Japan is proposing a way to decrease western influences in the wake of financial troubles. Many Asian economists believe this can be done through an Asian Monetary Fund (AMF). Originally proposed by Japan in 1997, the idea was immediately rejected by China, the United States and the G-7. China's rejections stem from its fears that Japan would financially dominate the fund. Objections from the U.S. were based on fears the AMF would undermine the role of the IMF. In theory, an AMF would work essentially the same way as the IMF. Asian nations could pool their resources, which could act as a financial safety net for troubled Asian economies. The difference between the two is that the IMF funding comes with strict requirements that are "increasingly seen by Asia as an American tool, used to pry open closed markets and destabilize potential competitors".⁶¹

The countries of East Asia also use the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) to address economic issues among themselves and the rest of the world. Established in 1989, APEC was initially designed to be an intergovernmental forum for nations in Asia. Focusing on East Asian nations the United States was not initially included. However, APEC accepted the U.S. that same year and now includes the following 21 countries: Australia; Brunei Darussalam; Canada; Chile; People's Republic of China; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Japan; Republic of Korea; Malaysia; Mexico; New Zealand; Papua New Guinea; Peru; Republic of the Philippines; Russia; Singapore;

⁶¹ "Obuchi Refloats Idea of Asian Monetary Fund", *Global Beat*, Global Intelligence Update Red Alert, September 29, 1998, <<http://www.nyu.edu/globalbeat/asia/GIU092998.html>>, Accessed November 4, 2000.

Chinese Taipei; Thailand; U.S.; Vietnam.⁶² Now, its East Asian members, especially the ASEAN states, view APEC as a way to engage the global economy and ensure the development of regional states while at the same time recognizing developmental differences.

The increasing strength and maturation of these organizations signifies Asia's new economic prominence. This new prominence is now being used by Asian states as leverage against the United States and other western nations.⁶³ Relying on a greater number of forums and organizations, will allow the nations of East Asia to continue to pool their strength when dealing with the United States. One by-product of these multilateral interactions will result in a diminishing of U.S. influence when dealing with individual nations.

⁶² *Multilateral Activities in South East Asia*, eds. Michael W. Everett and Mary A. Sommerville (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1995) 131.

⁶³ Richard J. Ellings and Edward A. Olsen, *Asia's Challenge to American Security*, Paper Prepared for the 18 March 1992 National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR) workshop on Asian Security Issues in Transition to the Twenty-First Century, (Washington, DC, Defense Intelligence College, March 1992) 5.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

The United States role in East Asia has changed. The cold war paradigm that formed the foundation of bilateral relations between the U.S. and Asian nations is no longer relevant. In the absence of a common threat, the nations of East Asia feel freer to guide their own course of development without heavy-handed U.S. guidance. For Asian nations the financial crisis highlighted the U.S. preponderance in the globalized world economy and has renewed concerns about its influence in the region. When the financial crisis hit, these states looked to the U.S. for direct and unqualified assistance. Instead, when the call for help from those Asian states went out only the IMF and other International Financial Institutions (IFI) answered. For those expecting direct bilateral support from the U.S., this was a disquieting experience.

Asia remains a region with significant animosities, differing economic and political systems, substantial religious rivalries, and potentially major tensions stemming from societal transitions. However, the changed threat environment and the dissolution or weakening of Cold War security arrangements have fueled recent interest in sub-regional and regional security cooperation. Though still in a nascent phase, cooperative security is becoming an important component of the national security strategies of Asian states. Although most Asian nations take a positive view of the U.S. security role, there

is a renewed desire in the region, particularly in China, to avoid American hegemony as well as American-led containment of China.

Asian nations have stepped up efforts to increase regional cooperation. Driven by a desire to reduce risks of conflict, to increase leverage vis-à-vis Washington, to better cope with any future financial crisis, and to capture potential economic benefits from regional cooperation, individual leaders have recently floated a number of integration proposals. These initiatives range from the formation of a regional bank to assist members in times of crisis, to the creation of a new regional security forum, to the establishment of an Asian common market along the lines of the European Union. While the United States has been encouraging this drive toward greater regional cooperation, a more economic and politically integrated Asia would be a mixed blessing. On one hand, closer ties would probably ease tensions and reduce the potential for conflict. In addition, a fall in Asia's own trade and investment barriers could make the region more supportive of Washington's market-opening initiatives. However, a more unified Asia would probably stand at times in opposition to U.S. wishes. It also would most likely be less dependent on Washington and thus a place where the United States would have even less leverage than it enjoys today. What Asia wants is more autonomy and independence in its affairs. In a recent interview, U.S. Commander in Chief of Pacific Forces, Admiral Dennis C. Blair acknowledged this problem in the following terms:

that regional alliances could dilute the power in Asia of both the United States and China, but in a "positive way . . . both the United States and Chinese power would be constrained by this arrangement and I think that would be good for this region."⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Dana Priest, Standing Up to State And Congress, The Proconsuls: Tension and Teamwork in Indonesia, *Washington Post*, September 30, 2000, pg. 1.

While the nations of East Asia continue to support continued U.S. troops deployments, many in the region would like to see the U.S. assume the role of a silent partner. In this role as silent partner, many East Asians would like to see the U.S. remain economically and militarily engaged in the region, while at the same time resisting the temptation of enforcing western values on the Far East cultures. To address this attitude, the United States must first recognize that there is a shift in the dynamics of its relationships in Asia. To remain that regional balancer and insure political and economic stability and cooperation, the U.S. should seek to find that middle ground between what it wants and what Asia wants. This middle ground can be found where trade and economic issues must be divorced from political and human rights issues.

According to Samuel Huntington, “western power” has peaked and is now in decline.⁶⁵ The increasing parochialism and diminishing U.S. influence in East Asia is initial evidence of this decline. East Asian nations are now more likely to “choose *not* to work on issues of importance to the United States, *not* to side with the United States on some issues, and to work against America on others”.⁶⁶ In this changing environment, Washington will have to strike the right balance in dealing with East Asia, while trying to maintain its influence. Realizing that most Asian states today are still struggling to modernize, develop and remain intact, the U.S. must recognize the limitations and sensitivities of its actions in the region. Because of the importance of the region to the economic health of the nation, the U.S. has a responsibility to remain a leading presence in the region. However, this presence will have to allow for the emerging nations of East

⁶⁵ Samuel Huntington, interview with David Gergen, *U.S. News and World Report*, 9 January 1997, <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/gergen/january97/order_1-10.html>, Accessed 1 November 2000.

⁶⁶ Ellings, et al, 8.

Asia to develop their own models for success and all guidance coming from the U.S. will have to allow for an Asian flavor in its application. A politically and economically stable East Asia that maintains sufficiently close interests with those of the United States can be obtained. The question will then be, can the U.S. bring East Asia down this path and still emerge as a “benign leading partner” in the region?

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